

# **Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association**

## **Brand Strategy Development**

**As prepared by Stanton & Everybody**

Your brand is a promise of performance. It is the sum of all the impressions received by customers resulting in a clear understanding of the perceived emotional and functional benefits of your services and products.

A successful branding program provides the following benefits: it amplifies perceived differences, builds stable long-term demand, protects profitability due to perceived value, creates powerful competitive barriers, provides a springboard for new products and services, increases word-of-mouth recommendations, ensures effective marketing expenditures, and increases the company's worth.

### **1. What are we doing to behave like a brand now?**

#### **(Functional & emotional attributes)**

The organization is focused on legislative and legal representation, i.e., water quality, health and environmental regulations, shoreline issues, and other matters that influence farming and processing. This practical union is one leg of a branding platform.

The group is in the beginning stages of adding a marketing leg as well. Marketing features and benefits should include freshness, flavor, nutritional benefits, industry standards (environmental codes/sustainable farming practices) that produce and maintain those benefits, and the willingness to support your marketing point of view, operationally, with a association-wide "satisfaction guarantee."

### **2. What are we doing that compromises our brand consistency?**

The PCSGA is not using their individual member marketing resources to sell their features and benefits package as a unified group. The organization needs to embrace some level of co-operative advertising and marketing along with issues management, if it is to be viewed as a brand or sub-brand in support of processor labels. Relying on small grants will not allow the group to be consistently represented, in an ongoing manner, as an actual brand.

PCSGA would benefit as a group to market quality as well as price. This will not eliminate price as a selling component, but relegate price to one of several aspects of brand value. In a price-based tactical approach, the consumer is not guaranteed the best product available. In order to be profitable at lower prices, processors can be led to compromises in quality standards.

Unified commitment to a set of standards for product quality will lead to better profitability regardless of price. The position that any leading brand wants to achieve is the "best value" status. Price + quality (real & perceived) = value

Other compromises in brand cohesion would include inconsistent or non-usage of the PCSGA logo in packaging.

### **3. What are the specific problems, challenges and opportunities currently facing the brand?**

There are two dynamics that effect this question; internal perspectives and external positions.

#### ***Internal***

The challenge is to create internal value for marketing as a unified group. Does the group truly want to use its strength of numbers for creating an umbrella brand? If so, an environment of cooperation needs to be established.

As a key component, unified quality standards help create a premium brand-product base, larger budgets for more reach and frequency in media, and the unified applications of a consistent logo representing the consortium all lead to pricing protection.

#### ***External***

Problems include no brand awareness for the trades or consumers and perception of quality/freshness and usage/preparation.

#### **Freshness**

This is the most important aspect in the purchase of shellfish, in both commercial and consumer-based decisions. Quality-based branding diminishes skepticism, builds trust and eliminates competition. While awareness is an important key to brand value, the most important element is your benefit set. When the benefits are structured around some aspect of the brand's credentials, they carry more weight.

This brings into play assets like where the product comes from, sustainable farming practices, and each member's dedication to quality, etc. The trades and/or consumers can't possibly know about your competitive features and benefits if you don't tell them.

#### **Usage**

Limited understanding of handling and usage, along with the question mark of freshness, undoubtedly leads to a "walk away" in the purchasing decision cycle. Developing recipes is key to increases in a category consumption strategy.

#### **Summary**

Marketplace opportunities should increase with a quality-guarantee standard and a dedication to new uses such as ethnic dishes. A marketing partnership within the organization will add to the individual efforts of the larger members. There is no perceived downside to behaving like the brand leader in a category. Effective marketing and advertising budgets should not be perceived as expenses or operations. They are an investment in sales.

### **4. Who are the primary and secondary demographic and psychographic target audiences?**

You have two key targets: the trades and their consumer bases. To date, the primary target should be the trades. They buy more of your products, more often than any other

target user. The trades (food service, restaurant and specialty groceries) use branding benefits to influence *their* customers' buying habits. Some noted examples would be:

Commodities with brand attributes

- Nebraska corn-fed beef
- Wisconsin cheese
- Ellensburg lamb
- Alaskan King salmon
- Grown In Washington chicken
- Idaho potatoes

These names represent a level of trust not perceived in other commodities. And whether it's local, regional or national, they all support the marketing premise that location matters or can matter when it comes to food. It is logical to assume that the freshest shellfish come from the Pacific Coast. Geography is an attribute in the case of the PCSGA.

By establishing a trade campaign that educates buyers, creates a branded commodity group and provides support to their marketing efforts, you will sell more products ultimately at better prices.

**5. What do they believe about the brand and or category today?**

There are a few brand distinctions in the shellfish industry, most through the wholesale channel. The consuming public has little or no brand reference. It could be assumed that brand-conscious consumers buy those products that they know to be local and or have a geographic reference point for their origin, i.e., Penn Cove Mussels.

**6. What do we want them to believe?**

Shellfish that carries the PCSGA brand is a leader in the category. They are quality-controlled and satisfaction is guaranteed. PCSGA shellfish are fresher, safer and healthier to eat than any other brand.

**7. What is the key promise and position?**

The members of the PCSGA are responsible farmers of the sea using sustainable farming techniques and they stand behind everything they sell. Products carrying this labeling feature are a better value.

**8. What do we have on our side that supports the promise?**

Location, environmental codes (sustainable farming practices) and a *satisfaction guarantee*.

**9. What is the appropriate brand personality?**

Confident. Demonstrate leadership credentials in style and information.

**10. What is the correct tone and manner for the advertising?**

Informative, logical, appetizing and high end.



**11. What is the media mix that best supports our strategic points of difference while providing support for shorter term, tactical challenges?**

Dominant page in trade publications, immediately. Targeted direct mail to food services, restaurants, specialty seafood grocery buyers. Down the road, high-end regional distributions of consumer magazines such as Bon Appetite, Food & Wine, and the Wine Spectator as an example. *Note: most consumer publications can be bought regionally for better targeting and cost efficiencies.*

Develop a more sales-oriented web site so the trade can actually buy, but provide an organized sales approach including the emotional marketing component. Develop a clearer and more interesting consumer section with nutritional information, where to buy, what to look for, etc., and full color photos of finished recipes and cross-references for wines and appropriate sides.

**12. What type of promotional involvement supports the brand? What type doesn't?**

Premium events like Taste Washington, Seattle Cooks, association with restaurants, trade shows (the right ones, not everyone). The key word here is "premium."

**13. How do we plan to keep the brand fresh, relevant and competitive for the future?**

Develop a meaningful annual advertising budget committed to a brand strategy. Do research as much as possible so you really understand what the market thinks. Act like the leaders.